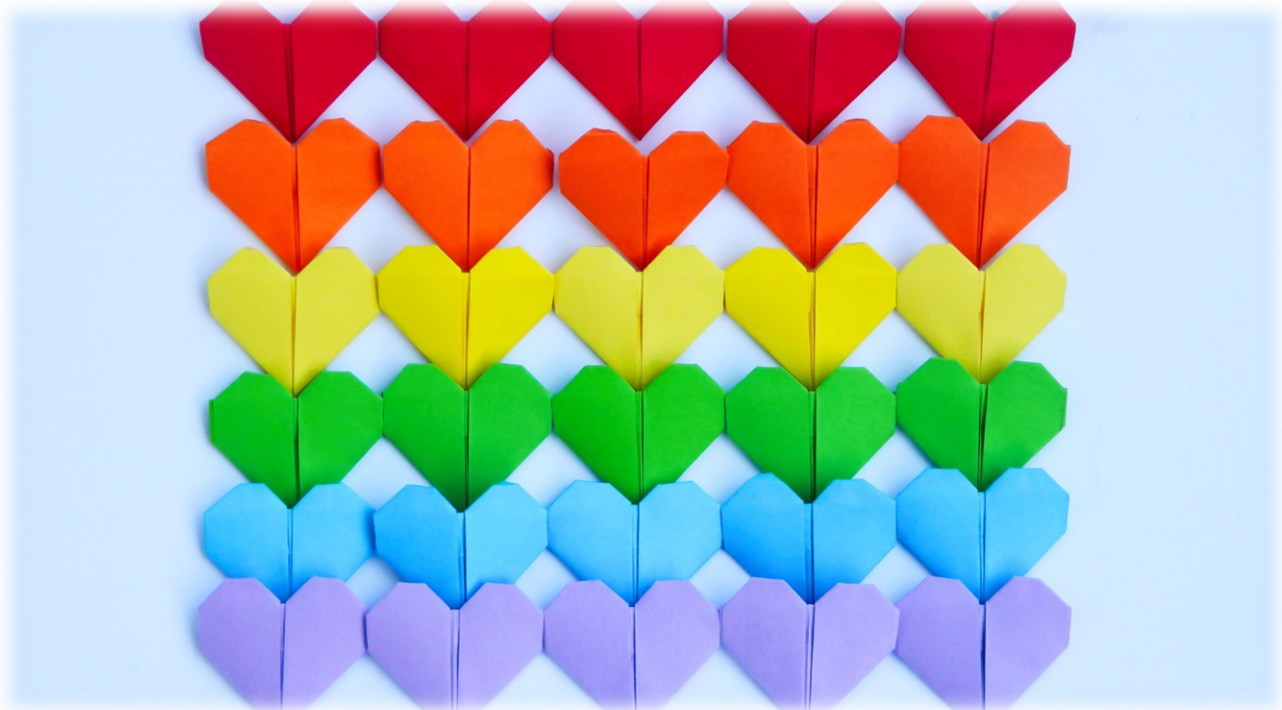




*Celebrating
177 Years*



June 4, 2023

Melville United Church

300 St. Andrew Street West, Fergus, ON N1M 1N9

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519-843-1781

Team Ministry

Minister of Worship, Pastoral Care & Outreach

Faith Formation & Youth

Ministry of Music Team

Office Administrator

Custodian

Chair of Church Council

Chair of Pastoral Care & Prayer Chain Captain

Office hours

E-Mail

Web Site

Pastoral Care Number

Rev. Lynda Goy-Flint

Naomi Flint

Suzanne Flewelling, Colleen Weber

Lynda Rivet

Robert Mitchell

Allan Hons

Alison Rainford

9:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m. T., Th. & F.

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519-843-3841

Melville United Church

June 4, 2023

Presiding today - Rev. Tom Watson

Music Ministry: Colleen Weber

Prelude

Welcome

Announcements

- The **Photo Directory** has arrived! It will be distributed on Sunday. Please see Lorna for your copy.
- **Our wonderful custodian Bob Mitchell is retiring at the end of June.** We want to recognize and thank Bob for his many years of service to Melville. On **Sunday, June 25th** in the Parlour after the worship service there will be a reception to honour Bob. We invite you to attend and celebrate with us. We are collecting money for a gift for Bob. If you want to contribute, please see Ralph Rainford. Thank you.
- **Broadview subscriptions are now due.** It is time to renew your subscription for another year. This wonderful magazine is available for the low price of \$25.00 (same as last year). Please see Ralph Rainford to renew or to sign up for a new subscription.
- Join us for an evening of authentic **Andean music by Eko-Gemah** here at Melville on **Saturday, June 10, at 7:00 pm**. This freewill donation concert is in support of Melville and the Guelph Food Bank. Immerse yourself in the captivating melodies of traditional acoustic instruments. For more information, contact Rene Crespo at rene.crespo@rogers.com.
- **Garden Team:** Our weekly meetings occur on **Mondays** at approximately **6:00pm**, weather permitting. We welcome anyone interested in joining us! To learn more, please reach out to us on Sundays or contact ogilvielms@gmail.com.
- **Friday or Sunday Coffee Time** – We encourage people to sign up to host either a Friday or a Sunday Coffee Time. It is not difficult! We'd be pleased to show you how. Sign-up sheets are at the Parlour Door. Please speak to Lorna Bevcar or Marg Frayne.
- **Donations to Garage Sales:** If you know of anyone moving, downsizing or de-cluttering, please keep Melville and our Garage Sales in mind. Donations can be dropped off at the office Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays from 9:00-3:30. For more information or if you have large items to donate please contact Lorna Bevcar.
- **VON invites you to join SMART (Seniors Maintaining Active Roles Together) Gentle Exercise Program Classes** at Melville **Tuesday and Thursday at 9:30 am** as there are available spots. The 10:30 class is fully booked. Classes are FREE. Call Danielle to register 519-803-0144.

We invite you to join us now for a time of worship and contemplation.

Land Acknowledgement *(Peter Chynoweth, Gathering: Pentecost 1 2022, p.33. Used with permission.)*

We acknowledge that this land on which we gather for worship is the traditional land of the people of Petun, Haudenosaunee (Hoe-day-no-show-nee), Anishinabewaki, Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, Odawa and Mississauga nations.

We acknowledge that we live on this land as people who have agreed to share the care and use

of this land as a result of treaties—the Simcoe Patent—Treaty No. 4, 1793 and the Haldimand Treaty, 1784 - that outlined the rights and responsibilities associated with our place in this land. May we be people who remember this with thanksgiving and respect.

Lighting the Christ Candle

Let us hear again, the ancient sacred words of our ancestors in faith:

The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness, not even the darkness of death, has overcome it.

Praise be to Christ, our light and our salvation.

Call to Worship

Like a light shining in the darkness...

Bringing new hope for our lives.

Like wings that carry us to new time...

Bringing fresh opportunities for abundant life.

Like a new morning breaking...

Is the caring, compassionate, love of our God.

On this brand new morning, let us come together in worship.

Hymn: Morning Has Broken VU 409

Morning has broken like the first morning,

Blackbird has spoken like the first bird.

Praise for the singing! Praise for the morning!

Praise for them springing fresh from the word!

Sweet the rain's new fall, sunlit from heaven,

Like the first dewfall on the first grass.

Praise for the sweetness of the wet garden,

Sprung in completeness where God's feet pass.

Ours is the sunlight! Ours is the morning

Born of the one light Eden saw play.

Praise with elation, praise every morning,

God's recreation of the new day!

Gathering Prayer (in unison):

Creator God, we give thanks for this day. We give thanks for the blessings of life this morning, this very moment. Open our hearts to words of love, hope, and promise. Open our eyes to ways to show compassion. May all of our living express abundant joy. Amen.

Hymn: This is God's Wondrous World VU 296

1. This is God's wondrous world, and to my listening ears,

All nature sings, and round me rings the music of the spheres.

This is God's wondrous world, I rest me in the thought

Of rocks and trees, of skies and seas, God's hand the wonders wrought.

2. This is God's wondrous world, the birds their carols raise,

The morning light, the lily white, declare their Maker's praise.

This is God's wondrous world. God shines in all that's fair,

In the rustling grass or mountain pass, God's voice speaks everywhere.

3. This is God's wondrous world. O let me ne'er forget
That though the wrong seems oft so strong, God is the ruler yet.
This is God's wondrous world: why should my heart be sad?
Let voices sing, let the heavens ring: God reigns, let earth be glad.

Children's Time

Ministry of Music: Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring by J.S. Bach arranged by Ellen Jane Lorenz

Scripture Reading — Luke 12:13-31

Someone in the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me." But he said to him, "Friend, who set me to be a judge or arbitrator over you?" And he said to the crowd, "Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions."

Then he told them a parable: "The land of a rich man produced abundantly. And he thought to himself, 'What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?' Then he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.' But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich towards God."

He said to his disciples, "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or about your body, what you will wear. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds!

And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? If then you are not able to do so small a thing as that, why do you worry about the rest? Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you—you of little faith!

And do not keep striving for what you are to eat and what you are to drink, and do not keep worrying. For it is the nations of the world that strive after all these things, and your Father knows that you need them. Instead, strive for God's kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well."

SERMON: "Life in Our Town...Homer Brown's Dilemma"

Well, it's been a busy week in Our Town. Spring has been breaking out all over...so the spring in people's step has been breaking out all over too. The women are busy planting vegetables in the garden, putting flowers in the beds by the house, mowing the lawns for the first time. All the usual spring chores.

Mildred Vickers spent the best part of Tuesday and Wednesday this week pulling dandelions out of their yard. Some of the time down on her hands and knees with a trowel. When Hank came home from his cribbage game about 4 o'clock on Wednesday afternoon, he said, "Mildred, those look like the same dandelions you pulled out last year. Did they all grow back?"

Good thing Mildred's aim was a little off, or Hank would have been clobbered by the clump of dirt that Mildred threw.

Now, it's about four years ago...maybe five...when Homer and Alice Brown moved to Our Town. They bought a place on the south edge. Quite a large lot. I guess you'd call it an acreage. The main reason they bought it was that it had a large barn. Homer had been collecting old tractors for years, and he wanted a good-sized barn to keep the tractors in.

But, like most collectors, Homer had a problem—it was hard for him to stop collecting. There was always another old Massey model 20, or Cockshutt 40, or Farmall H, for sale somewhere, and he'd go buy it. Even went clean to Ohio to bring back a vintage 1922 Fordson.

Homer built up one of the best collections of old tractors anywhere in the country. But, due to his constantly growing collection, it wasn't long before he had to build a second barn. And two years ago a third.

He spent a good part of every day out in the barns, starting up his tractors to make sure they kept running well, giving them a good wash to keep the dust off, and so on. Those old tractors were his passion, they gave his life meaning, purpose, zest.

But then, about a year ago, Homer's health took a bad turn. Arthritis had been setting in for a while, and it got worse. His fingers became bent, hands crippled, and then it attacked his legs...and it gradually got to the point where a lot of days he just didn't feel like getting out of bed...let alone go out to his barns and spend time with his tractors.

Life...life was taking its inevitable toll on Homer Brown.

One afternoon, Alice said to him, "Homer, I just don't know what we're going to do."

"About what, Alice?" asked Homer.

"Well, my dear, you have those three barns filled with your tractors, but now you're not able to look after them like you used to. It's clear to me that some changes are coming to our lives...we're not far off from having to move from here...and..."

"I know," said Homer. "I don't know what we're going to do either. I don't even know where to begin to try and sell those tractors...and neither of our daughters will be interested in them, let alone the house and barns on this place...so what will we do with all of it?"

Well, that's all the news from Our Town for this week. At least from the stories that I've heard.

What would you do if you were Homer and Alice Brown?

Their dilemma isn't unique. The question comes to all of us at some point: What will I do with my pile of stuff?

I've looked at my own life. During my lifetime I have acquired, accumulated, saved, a certain amount of stuff—money, property, things. I've done this accumulating for the very same reasons you do it—maybe because it provides security...or maybe just because the things I own have given me a degree of pleasure.

But there will come the day when I will have to leave it all behind. By then, all my stuff—be it little or much—will become somebody else's to enjoy, to build upon, to waste. Or maybe not want at all. Or even worse, to fight over.

Well, I really wouldn't want anybody else fighting over my stuff. Would you? That's the last thing that I would want my heirs to be doing—fighting over who gets what and how much.

And yet it happens. It's happening in this morning's gospel story. Jesus has been speaking to a large crowd, and after it's all over one of them comes up to him and says, "Teacher, bid my brother divide the inheritance with me." To which Jesus responds by asking the question, "Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?"

Now, in order fully to understand the interchange that leads up to the parable, we have to know that what was at issue here was the age-old law—recorded in the Book of Deuteronomy—which said that the first-born son was to receive twice as much as the second-born son when it came to dividing up an inheritance.

So the younger son comes to Jesus seeking some new understanding of the law. In those days, rabbis frequently acted in a way similar to our magistrates, and were able to make rulings concerning disputes. It just didn't seem fair to him that his older brother received twice as much as he, just because he was born first. So he obviously hoped that Jesus would look favourably upon his claim.

And I suspect we might well have some sympathy for his position, especially if we are the younger in the family. But that was the way things were done in those days.

Disputes haven't been limited to "back then," of course, they still happen. A few years back, the mother of a friend of mine died. She was a widow; the father had died several years earlier. There were 5 siblings in the family. They couldn't agree on anything. By the time the estate was settled, hardly anyone was talking to anyone else.

Do you know how it goes?

"I am supposed to get that old rocking chair from the living room. Mother promised it to me a long time ago."

"No, I am supposed to get the rocking chair. You are to get the mounted moose-head from the wall in the den."

Back to the gospel story. After the dialogue with the younger son, Jesus went on to tell the crowd a parable. Once upon a time there was a rich farmer. This farmer was not only an excellent farmer

who grew excellent crops; he was also a good business manager, with a sound eye for wise planning and decision-making.

It could also be that he was a bit lucky as well, and expanded his acreage at precisely the time that the weather turned perfect for growing good crops...so his crop poured out to market just like great cascades of gold, and the money poured back in just like green rain. And it was wonderful.

With things booming like this, and the future looking so bright, the farmer hired a contractor to build bigger barns for him, so that as the years rolled by he would be able to take care of the continuing bumper crops.

In addition, he made only blue-chip investments with his money, and carefully took advantage of available tax shelters, and wrapped himself as tightly as he could in layers of security.

But in the end, it all came for naught. It seems that he had pulled his layers of security so tightly around himself that they finally clamped down on his heart. He had a heart attack and died. And that was that.

Luke's story ends with God saying to the man, "You fool! Tonight your soul is required of you. And these things that you have built up, whose will they be now?"

The problem is, of course, just like the old proverb says it: ten times the grain still only makes one time bigger the cow. Ten times bigger a barn still only makes one time bigger the person.

And that's the rub emphasized by Jesus' story. If I concentrate only on building the barn, and not on building the person, I might well become rich, but I will be a rich fool.

Back to the story of Homer and Alice Brown. The big question in their story isn't who will inherit the barns and the tractor collection...because it's obvious that nobody else is going to want it. The question that looms large in their dilemma is: How do we adapt to changes in our lives?

When those changes come...as they inevitably do...our big barns, filled with our prized collectibles, won't bring us the comfort we need. What will bring us comfort is our attitude towards life and what's ultimately important.

A girl by the name of Maria grew up during the worst of the Great Depression. One evening Maria was doing her homework in the living room. Her brothers were outside, playing with their friends. Her parents were in the kitchen, discussing their financial situation.

Maria found her ear tuned increasingly to her parents' conversation about money and bills to be paid, and less and less to her homework. They spoke of school needs, fuel bills, the cost of food. As she listened, Maria became more anxious, because she realized that there just wasn't enough to go around.

Suddenly, the conversation stopped, and her mother came into the living room. She put some money—a couple of dollar bills and handful of change—on the desk and said to Maria, "Here. Go find your brothers and run to the drugstore before it closes, and buy some strawberry ice cream."

Maria was astonished. "What?" she said to her mother. "You need this money to pay bills, to buy school things. We can't spend it on ice cream. Don't be foolish. I'm going to ask Daddy about this."

So she went to her father, telling him what her mother had asked her to do. Her father looked at her for a moment, then threw back his head and laughed, "Your mother is right. When we get this worried and upset about a few dollars, we are better off having nothing at all. We can't solve all the problems, so maybe we should celebrate instead. Do as your mother says and go and get some ice cream."

Some years later, Maria reflected, "I don't remember what happened concerning the other needs, but I do remember the fun we had that evening, eating the ice cream. And I have thought about that evening many times. The bills were paid somehow, and we made it through the weeks and months that followed. I learned that evening that my parents were not going to allow money to dominate them."

I wonder how many of us could call for a party, with the last of our financial resources, rather than spending it on what we would deem to be essentials? Although, in fairness, it might be easier to do then than it is when we have plenty but just don't realize it.

The truth is that, of course, that far more important in life than anything else is a sense of what is ultimately important—things like love, friendship, faith, hope. Those are the things that last and do us the most good in the long run.

If we have a sense of what is ultimately important, we will, somehow, be able to keep life in its proper perspective. And then, as Maria's story about squandering the last pennies on ice cream points out, even if we are very, very poor in financial terms, we will be very, very rich.

Jesus put it this way: "A person's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."

Or to put it another way, "You are only as rich as the things you can do without."

When I was a student minister in Straffordville, Vienna and Port Burwell, there was a woman named Kathleen Matthews. Everybody called her Aunt Kate.

Aunt Kate had known much sorrow and pain during her lifetime, but she also possessed the greatest trust in God, and the greatest attitude toward life of any person I have ever known.

She'd had several operations, and was growing more frail as time went on. Her two daughters-in-law were intent on making sure she stayed home as much as possible—you know why...so she didn't have a spell of some kind when she was out somewhere.

One thing she really loved to do was pick strawberries, so she asked my late wife, Janice, to take her to the berry patch down by Port Burwell. Janice said, "Won't we get in trouble with the two girls? And what if you have a spell while we're down there?" She replied, "If I'm going to die, the strawberry patch is as good a place as any!"

So, off they went to the strawberry patch. There they were picking merrily away...and who should show up...you guessed it...the two daughters-in-law. They weren't that happy to see her there.

But she said the same to them as she had said to Janice: "If I'm going to die, the strawberry patch is as good a place as any!"

You see, she couldn't do much about the circumstances of her life...but she could do something about her attitude, and the way she faced life.

Back to the story of Homer and Alice Brown in *Our Town*. Say that they came to you, seeking advice about their dilemma—Homer's collection, his bigger barns, their failing health, their trying to figure out how to adapt to the changes that life was bringing. What would you tell them?

Hymn: Put Peace Into Each Other's Hands MV 173

1. Put peace into each other's hands and like a treasure hold it;
Protect it like a candle flame, with tenderness enfold it.
2. Put peace into each other's hands with loving expectation;
Be gentle in your words and ways, in touch with God's creation.
3. Put peace into each other's hands, like bread we break for sharing;
Look people warmly in the eye: our life is meant for caring.
4. Give thanks for strong yet tender hands, held out in trust and blessing;
Where words fall short, let hands speak out, the heights of love expressing.
5. Reach out in friendship, stay with faith in touch with those around you.
Put peace into each other's hands; the Peace that sought and found you.

Sharing our joys and concerns

A year and a bit ago, the husband of a good friend of mine died. She had looked after him at home for quite some time before his death. When he died, she was at loose ends. She had lost her soul mate, and often didn't know where to turn. I knew that she spent quite a bit of time looking out the window above her kitchen sink, so I drove down her street, parked across from her house, and tried to imagine what she might see out that kitchen window that would give her fresh hope. From that I wrote the following poem which I took to her.

Poem: "A Morning Benediction" by Tom Watson

She dons a housecoat,
goes to the kitchen sink
and catches water in a
coffee pot. On the wall
of the house next door,
she sees a robin land on
an eave and begin a
tug of war with a twig
caught fast between
two rows of bricks,

which reminds her of her own struggles since her life changed forever a few weeks ago—how often she stumbled over worries that blocked her path, forced her to retreat and wrap herself tightly in the grey shadows of her loneliness.

But this bird—one of God's smallest and most fragile creatures—keeps pecking at the twig until it finally wins the battle and flies off, the twig clenched triumphantly in its small beak.

She takes her coffee to the kitchen table, opens a book of morning meditations: "Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet God looks after them. Are you not of much more value than they? And can you, by worrying, add even a single hour to your life?"

She closes the book. Outside her window the sky is a soft spring blue, crocuses are poking their dainty shoots through the sun-warmed soil. The Creator is once more filling the world with fresh colours, calling all things to begin anew.

Overwhelmed with feelings of gratitude for the gift of being alive like the birds in the air, tears of joy trickle down her cheek. As the robin

in the distance sings a grace-filled morning benediction, she gathers her strength, smiles and starts to make plans for a new day.

Prayers Of the People and The Prayer of Jesus

Here we are, God—your people.

Your people. Born in the light of the Bright and Morning star.

Followers of Jesus, who called us to lives overflowing with your grace, your peace, your joy.

Your people. Called to live into the future. No longer people of yesterday, but new people!

Not patched up, mended...new!

Like a newborn child. Like a brand new morning.

All guilt from yesterday is gone. Nothing left to stain the soul. Forgiven and called to newness of life.

In our newness, we are free.

Free to live in the power of your ongoing creation, O God.

Free to believe again, have faith again, hope again.

Free to dance in life's rains...because we see the rainbow.

Free to live...and love...and laugh.

Free to pray...and praise.

Free to share your joy with everyone we touch.

Free to experience your vision, O God—of a world where all people are embraced as brothers and sisters.

A world where we hold each other's hand in the darkness, and lead each other to new light and life.

A world alive in the spirit of the living God.

Thanks and praise be to you, O God. In the name of the joy-filled spirit of Christ.

Offering Invitation

Offering Hymn: Praise God from whom all Blessings Flow VU 541

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;

Praise God, all creatures high and low;

Give thanks to God in love made known,

Creator, Word and Spirit One.

Offering Prayer:

Minute for Mission

Hymn: The Lord's My Shepherd VU page 747

1. The Lord's my shepherd; I'll not want.

He makes me down to lie in pastures green;

He leadeth me the quiet waters by.

2. My soul he doth restore again,

And me to walk doth make within the paths of righteousness,

Even for his own name's sake;

3. Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale,
Yet will I fear no ill; for thou art with me, and thy rod
And staff me comfort still;

4. My table thou hast furnished in presence of my foes;
My head thou dost with oil anoint,
And my cup overflows.

5. Goodness and mercy all my life shall surely follow me,
And in God's house forevermore
My dwelling place shall be;

Benediction

May the God who blesses us with goodness and mercy make our hearts as new as a grand summer day!

May the God who gave us springs of running water, and rich earth in which to scatter seeds to grow our food, nourish us with contentment for our spirits!

In our day to day living, may we be as trusting as the birds of the air and the flowers of the field!

And may wonder remain alive in us, this day and always!

Amen.

Postlude

Household Prayer:

Wondrous God, I am in awe that you would choose to be born among us, revealing your divineness enlivening the ordinary things of my life.

I thank you for the gift of Jesus who walked among us, wept with the suffering and raged in anger at the injustices of his day. I thank you for the vision you etched in his heart, a fullness of righteousness for all the world.

I thank you that he called others to follow that they too might know the joy of new life. As Jesus' disciple, help me to walk in the way. Help me to carry the vision in my heart, however discouraged I get. Help me to see through eyes of faith, my life, my relationships, the world you so love. Help me day by day, in my words and deeds to reflect your light.

Through your wisdom and Spirit, may I grow in my capacity to love you, my neighbour, and myself, as you so love. Amen.

Worship Schedule

| | | |
|---------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| June 10 | Eko Gemah Fundraising Concert 7:00pm | |
| June 11 | 2 nd after Pentecost | Rev. Felisha Urbanski |
| June 18 | 3 rd after Pentecost | Social Justice Committee |
| June 25 | Indigenous Sunday | Rev. Tom Watson |
| June 25 | Evening Garden Service 6:30pm | |